

# Guides to Evidence-Based Practices for Educators in Elementary Schools

WHAT WORKS  
CLEARINGHOUSE™

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*The [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) encourages educators to use evidence-based practices. Knowing what works to improve student outcomes can inform school improvement and the design of projects in elementary education.*

[What Works Clearinghouse \(WWC\)](#) [practice guides](#) provide recommendations that can help teachers, administrators, and other educators improve student outcomes. Panels of nationally recognized experts draw on WWC reviews of research as well as their own expertise to develop these recommendations and related action steps. The WWC characterizes the level of evidence for each recommendation as "strong," "moderate," or "minimal".

The four practice guides listed here include recommendations for use in elementary schools. Practices that meet the U.S. Department of Education [definition](#) of **Strong Evidence** (Tier 1) under ESSA are shown in green. Practices meeting the definition of **Moderate Evidence** (Tier 2) are shown in yellow. Practices in gray, which the guides describe as based on "minimal evidence," meet the Department's definition of evidence that **Demonstrates a Rationale** (Tier 4). Recommendations from practice guides released in 2010 or earlier are not shown below, but can meet the Department's definition of **Promising Evidence** (Tier 3) if the guide describes the corresponding evidence as "strong" or "moderate."



## **Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade (2016)**

*4 Recommendations*

### **Tier 1 – Strong evidence**



Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters.



Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

### **Tier 2 – Moderate evidence**



Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

### **Tier 4 – Minimal Evidence**



Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge.

## Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School (2014)

### 4 Recommendations

#### Tier 1 – Strong evidence



Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities.



Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching.

#### Tier 2 – Moderate evidence



Provide small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in areas of literacy and English language development.

#### Tier 4 – Minimal Evidence



Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills.

## Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers (2018)

### 4 Recommendations

#### Tier 1 – Strong evidence



Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes.

#### Tier 2 – Moderate evidence



Teach students to become fluent with handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, and word processing.

#### Tier 4 – Minimal Evidence



Provide daily time for students to write.



Create an engaged community of writers.

## Teaching Math to Young Children (2013)

### 5 Recommendations

#### Tier 2 – Moderate evidence



Teach number and operations using a developmental progression.

#### Tier 4 – Minimal Evidence



Teach geometry, patterns, measurement, and data analysis using a developmental progression.

#### Tier 4 – Minimal Evidence *cont.*



Use progress monitoring to ensure that math instruction builds on what each child knows.



Teach children to view and describe their world mathematically.



Dedicate time each day to teaching math, and integrate math instruction throughout the school day.